

For war forever'll never
let you down. We'll
obliterate inhabitants
if we can't smash towns.

Mosques looking tourist-pretty
against the sunset bars.

So, whenever possible leave them
standing.

So it came to pass t hat we smote
ad dealt destruction unto them.

And it furter came to pass
we gave further unto them
democracy uyp the ass.

Waterboarding, though initially
displeasing to the bleeding hearts
had the right end in view.

If you leave us alone
we won't be such deadly fuckers.

Oh yeah? You'll drink Coke and
toast us, Mohammad, baby.

I love war forever,
don't you? & Chevies aren't
so bad a dirty Arab might
not want one.

The way to keep them out of Omaha
is to continually invite them in.

Present dimwits being the ox
in that paradox.
We'' be as evil if we do that.

Pentagon review
America's Long War

Last week US defence chiefs unveiled their plan for battling global Islamist
extremism. They envisage a conflict fought in dozens of countries and for

decades to come. Today we look in detail at this seismic shift in strategic thinking, and what it will mean for Britain

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The message from General Peter Pace, the chairman of the US joint chiefs of staff, was apocalyptic. "We are at a critical time in the history of this great country and find ourselves challenged in ways we did not expect. We face a ruthless enemy intent on destroying our way of life and an uncertain future."

Gen Pace was endorsing the Pentagon's four-yearly strategy review, presented to Congress last week. The report sets out a plan for prosecuting what the the Pentagon describes in the preface as "The Long War", which replaces the "war on terror". The long war represents more than just a linguistic shift: it reflects the ongoing development of US strategic thinking since the September 11 attacks.

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Looking beyond the Iraq and Afghan battlefields, US commanders envisage a war unlimited in time and space against global Islamist extremism. "The struggle ... may well be fought in dozens of other countries simultaneously and for many years to come," the report says. The emphasis switches from large-scale, conventional military operations, such as the 2003 invasion of Iraq, towards a rapid deployment of highly mobile, often covert, counter-terrorist forces.

Among specific measures proposed are: an increase in special operations forces by 15%; an extra 3,700 personnel in psychological operations and civil affairs units - an increase of 33%; nearly double the number of unmanned aerial drones; the conversion of submarine-launched Trident nuclear missiles for use in conventional strikes; new close-to-shore, high-speed naval capabilities; special teams trained to detect and render safe nuclear weapons quickly anywhere in the world; and a new long-range bomber force.

The Pentagon does not pinpoint the countries it sees as future areas of operations but they will stretch beyond the Middle East to the Horn of Africa, north Africa, central and south-east Asia and the northern Caucasus.

The cold war dominated the world from 1946 to 1991: the long war could determine the shape of the world for decades to come. The plan rests heavily on a much higher level of cooperation and integration with Britain and other Nato allies, and the increased recruitment of regional

governments through the use of economic, political, military and security means. It calls on allies to build their capacity "to share the risks and responsibilities of today's complex challenges".

The Pentagon must become adept at working with interior ministries as well as defence ministries, the report says. It describes this as "a substantial shift in emphasis that demands broader and more flexible legal authorities and cooperative mechanisms ... Bringing all the elements of US power to bear to win the long war requires overhauling traditional foreign assistance and export control activities and laws."

Unconventional approach

The report, whose consequences are still being assessed in European capitals, states: "This war requires the US military to adopt unconventional and indirect approaches." It adds: "We have been adjusting the US global force posture, making long overdue adjustments to US basing by moving away from a static defence in obsolete cold war garrisons, and placing emphasis on the ability to surge quickly to troublespots across the globe."

The strategy mirrors in some respects a recent readjustment in British strategic thinking but it is on a vastly greater scale, funded by an overall 2007 US defence spending request of more than \$513bn.

As well as big expenditure projects, the report calls for: investments in signals and human intelligence gathering - spies on the ground; funding for the Nato intelligence fusion centre; increased space radar capability; the expansion of the global information grid (a protected information network); and an information-sharing strategy "to guide operations with federal, state, local and coalition partners". A push will also be made to improve forces' linguistic skills, with an emphasis on Arabic, Chinese and Farsi.

The US plan, developed by military and civilian staff at the Pentagon in concert with other branches of the US government, will raise concerns about exacerbating the "clash of civilisations" and about the respect accorded to international law and human rights. To wage the long war, the report urges Congress to grant the Pentagon and its agencies expanded permanent legal authority of the kind used in Iraq, which may give US commanders greatly extended powers.

"Long duration, complex operations involving the US military, other government agencies and international partners will be waged simultaneously in multiple countries round the world, relying on a combination of direct (visible) and indirect (clandestine) approaches," the report says. "Above all they will require persistent surveillance and vastly better intelligence to locate enemy capabilities and personnel. They will

also require global mobility, rapid strike, sustained unconventional warfare, foreign internal defence, counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency capabilities. Maintaining a long-term, low-visibility presence in many areas of the world where US forces do not traditionally operate will be required."

The report exposes the sheer ambition of the US attempt to mastermind global security. "The US will work to ensure that all major and emerging powers are integrated as constructive actors and stakeholders into the international system. It will also seek to ensure that no foreign power can dictate the terms of regional or global security.

Building partnerships

"It will attempt to dissuade any military competitor from developing disruptive capabilities that could enable regional hegemony or hostile action against the US and friendly countries."

Briefing reporters in Washington, Ryan Henry, a Pentagon policy official, said: "When we refer to the long war, that is the war against terrorist extremists and the ideology that feeds it, and that is something that we do see going on for decades." He added that the strategy was aimed at responding to the "uncertainty and unpredictability" of this conflict. "We in the defence department feel fairly confident that our forces will be called on to be engaged somewhere in the world in the next decade where they're currently not engaged, but we have no idea whatsoever where that might be, when that might be or in what circumstances that they might be engaged.

"We realise that almost in all circumstances others will be able to do the job less expensively than we can because we tend to have a very cost-intensive force. But many times they'll be able to do it more effectively too because they'll understand the local language, the local customs, they'll be culturally adept and be able to get things accomplished that we can't do. So building a partnership capability is a critical lesson learned.

"The operational realm for that will not necessarily be Afghanistan and Iraq; rather, that there are large swaths of the world that that's involved in and we are engaged today. We are engaged in things in the Philippines, in the Horn of Africa. There are issues in the pan-Sahel region of north Africa.

"There's a number of different places where there are activities where terrorist elements are out there and that we need to counter them, we need to be able to attack and disrupt their networks."

Priorities

The report identifies four priority areas

- Defeating terrorist networks
- Defending the homeland in depth
- Shaping the choices of countries at strategic crossroads
- Preventing hostile states and non-state actors from acquiring or using weapons of mass destruction

Lawrence's legacy

The Pentagon planners who drew up the long war strategy had a host of experts to draw on for inspiration. But they credit only one in the report: Lawrence of Arabia.

The authors anticipate US forces being engaged in irregular warfare around the world. They advocate "an indirect approach", building and working with others, and seeking "to unbalance adversaries physically and psychologically, rather than attacking them where they are strongest or in the manner they expect to be attacked.

They write: "One historical example that illustrates both concepts comes from the Arab revolt in 1917 in a distant theatre of the first world war, when British Colonel TE Lawrence and a group of lightly armed Bedouin tribesmen seized the Ottoman port city of Aqaba by attacking from an undefended desert side, rather than confronting the garrison's coastal artillery by attacking from the sea."